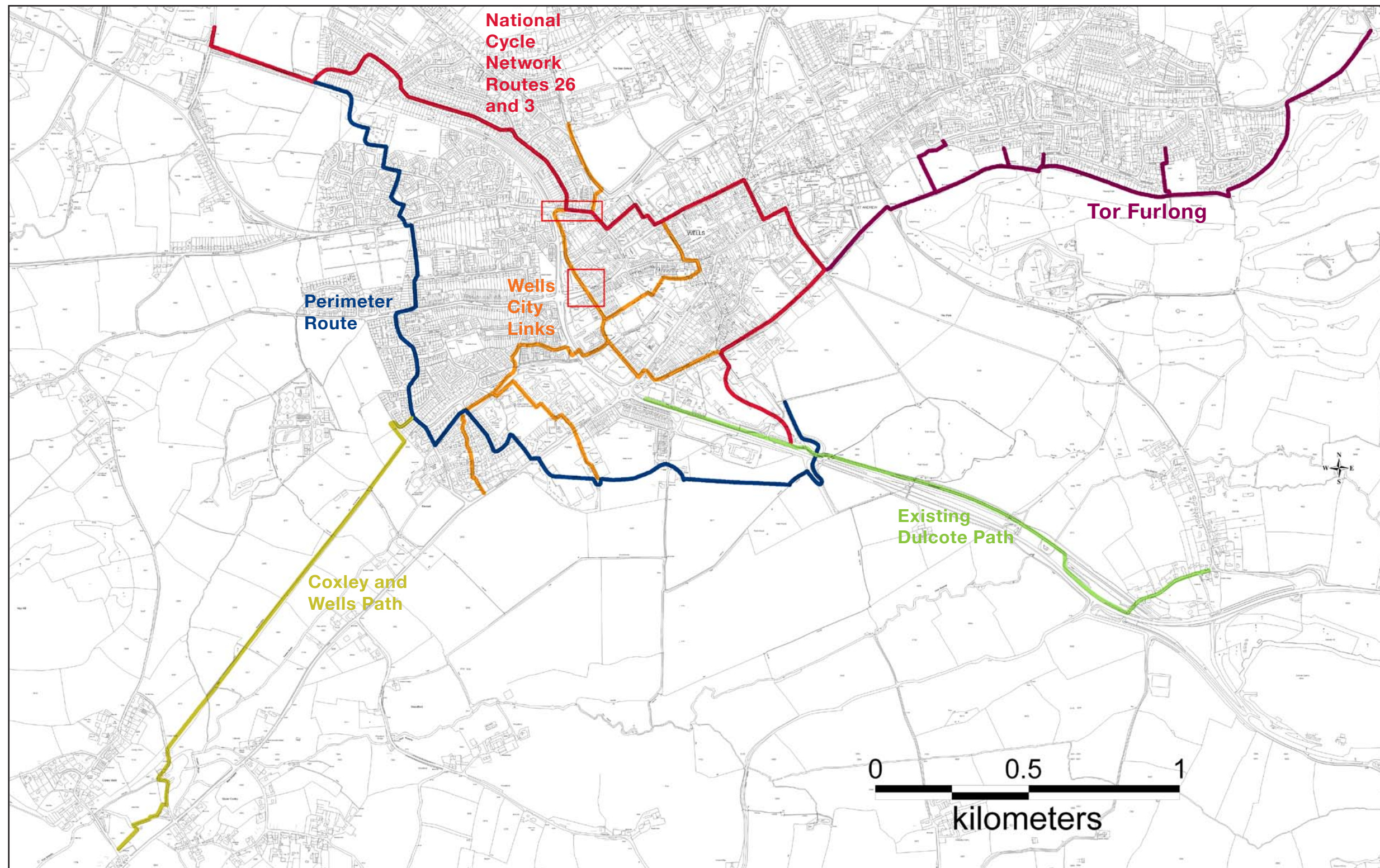


City of Wells Cycle Network

National Cycle Network Routes 26 and 3 through Wells City Centre



City of Wells Cycle Network

Introduction

The City of Wells is an important market town in Somerset with a resident population in excess of 10,000 and a high number of tourist visitors to the City, surrounding countryside and many local attractions. The City is a compact settlement which has spread from the historic centre round the Cathedral to the east and west along the foot of the Mendip Hills to the North. The City is therefore generally level, and the vast majority of the housing is within one mile of the centre of the City, and no more than two miles from any other part of the settlement. This should indicate that many residents of the City and villages would walk and cycle on their everyday trips within the City, yet the City is characterised by congested roads and high pressure on car parking.

This report should be regarded as a work in progress, designed to inform and guide future development in the City, and a work which will itself evolve over time as the City itself develops and changes.

Aim

To demonstrate how a City of Wells Cycle Network could be developed to encourage more local journeys to be made on foot and by bike.

Objectives of the City of Wells Cycle Network

To create routes to link the Haybridge and Wells Leisure Centre Multi-use Path, and to link residential areas with significant destinations including:

- Schools,
- Health facilities,
- Shops and the City Centre,
- Work places,

To create routes which are:

- safe,
- attractive,
- continuous,
- more convenient than the alternative journey by car.

To ensure that all future development in the City and outlying settlements includes the City of Well Cycle Network and links to it.

Nature of Routes in the Network

- The routes will be on quiet residential roads, and traffic free paths.
- Traffic free paths will be open to walkers, wheelchair users and cyclists and, where appropriate, equestrians.
- Crossings of other roads will be designed to be safe and convenient for walkers, wheelchair users and cyclists, and horse riders where appropriate.
- All routes will be consistently signed with destinations and distances.

Overview of the Network

The primary route links Haybridge, National Cycle Network Route 26, with NCN route 3 which meets route 26 on the west side of the City, across the City to the Dulcote Path. This route has been open for almost ten years, but is felt to be sub-standard in some respects, particularly the use of the busy western section of Chamberlain Street, and the southern part of Priory Road.

The NCN route makes a point of visiting the City Centre and Cathedral as a highlight for any visitor to the City, but for everyday journeys east / west across the City, a more direct route is desirable and this is mapped as an alternative.

The remaining proposed routes in the Network have been developed by local residents and form the basis of a comprehensive Network which would allow residents to travel in sustainable ways more conveniently than similar journeys by private car. Developing the Network in such a compact, mostly level settlement has the potential to arrest the steep decline in cycling locally and rebuild a culture of travelling in sustainable ways.

Both the Haybridge and Dulcote paths are available to equestrians, but few horse-riders would wish to traverse the City centre to link the paths. The route skirting the southern perimeter of the City (Jocelyn Drive) is designed to meet this need. The Coxley Path should also be designed for multiple use.

Acknowledgements and contacts

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National Cycle Network Routes 26 and 3 through Wells City Centre

1. The proposed Wells / Cheddar path closely follows the former railway line and is subject of a planning application as at December 2006.
2. Link to Glencot Road and Wookey Hole.
3. Newly completed path between Wells Leisure Centre and Haybridge.



Haybridge path

4. Link to Mount Pleasant Avenue.
5. Mount Pleasant Avenue is a quiet residential road. This would be the preferred route for cycle access to the City Centre and major supermarkets if the Wookey Road could be avoided, which is at present not possible.



Quiet residential roads form large parts of the Network

6. See inset plan. Crossing the Portway is the major barrier in the way of access to the City from the Mount Pleasant area. There is a large number of journeys made across this road as residents travel to and from shops; pupils travel to the Blue School; staff travel to the employment sites.

The light controlled crossing involves three separate road crossings for pedestrians, which on a short journey, as most would be, add significantly to the inconvenience. The suggested solution attempts to improve conditions for cyclists and pedestrians by simplifying the existing road crossing, but the width of Portway probably precludes on-carriageway cycle lanes, and less confident cyclists would probably choose to use the footway to the existing Toucan crossings, so introducing shared use should be considered.



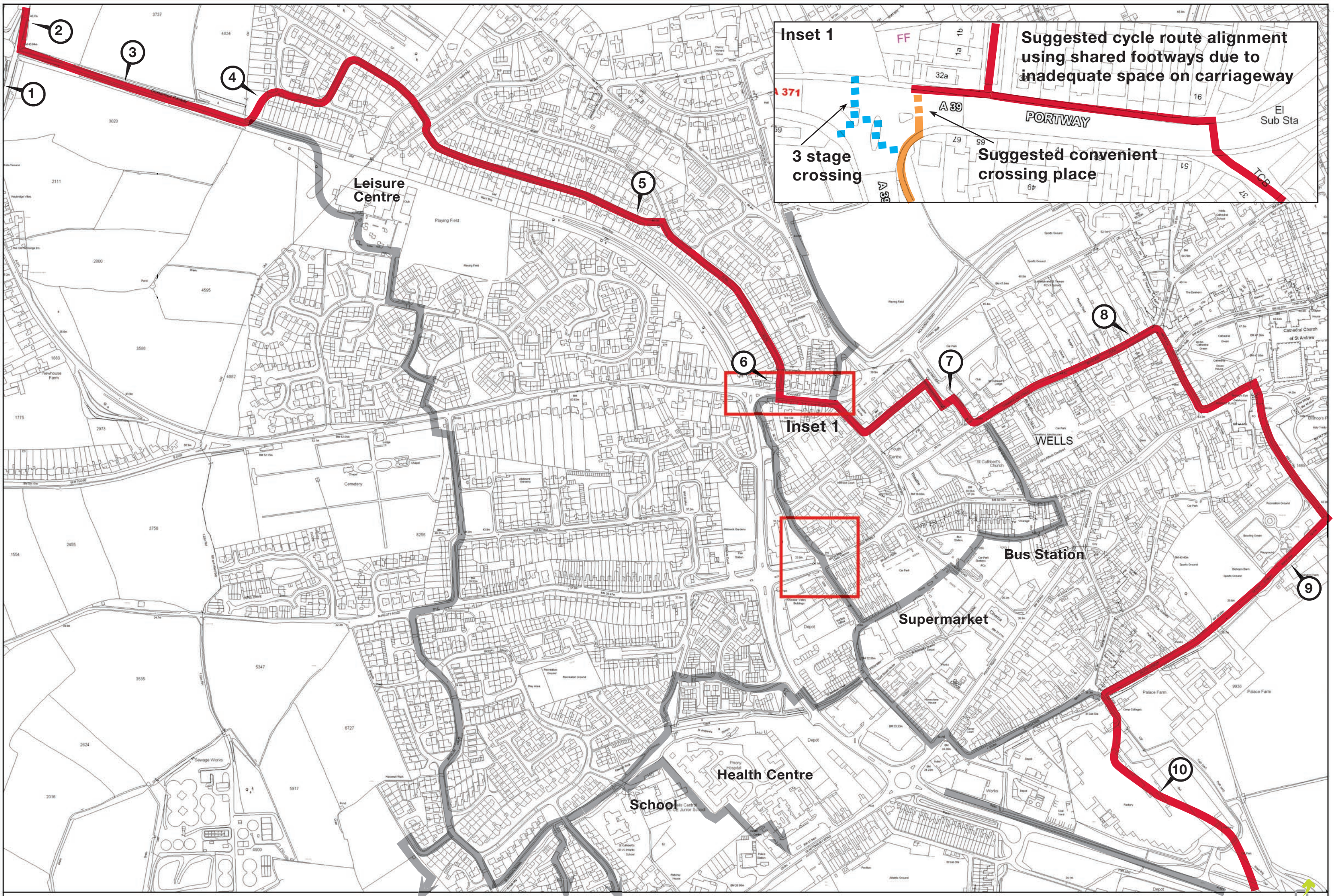
The Portway (see inset 1.)

7. A minor widening of the gap in the fence at the northern end of Portway Avenue allows access to the path on the south side of Whiting Way to break a passage through the landscape planting to use the pedestrian crossing and wide footway by the Job Centre and the pedestrian crossing on Chamberlain Street.



Existing path could be widened for shared use

8. Cycle traffic going towards the Cathedral can use the cycle contraflow on Chamberlain Street. The Chamberlain Street crossing and Priests Row gives access to the southern end of the centre. Union Street to the north also gives access to the High Street.
9. Silver Street is quiet but congested with parked cars.
10. The Clares Factory site is subject of a planning appeal for redevelopment as a mixed housing, business and hotel site. The planning application includes provision for a cycle path across the site to join the existing Dulcote Path (National Cycle network Route 3) alongside the East Somerset Way.



Blue School Link

11. A light controlled crossing to a new entrance to the Blue School would allow pupils to avoid the difficult road crossing near the school gates (13).
12. A new paved path in the school grounds – accessed from the Wookey Road would entail a new ramp.
13. Currently pupils must negotiate this junction at the busiest times of the day, and walk the narrow footways on the Wookey Road.

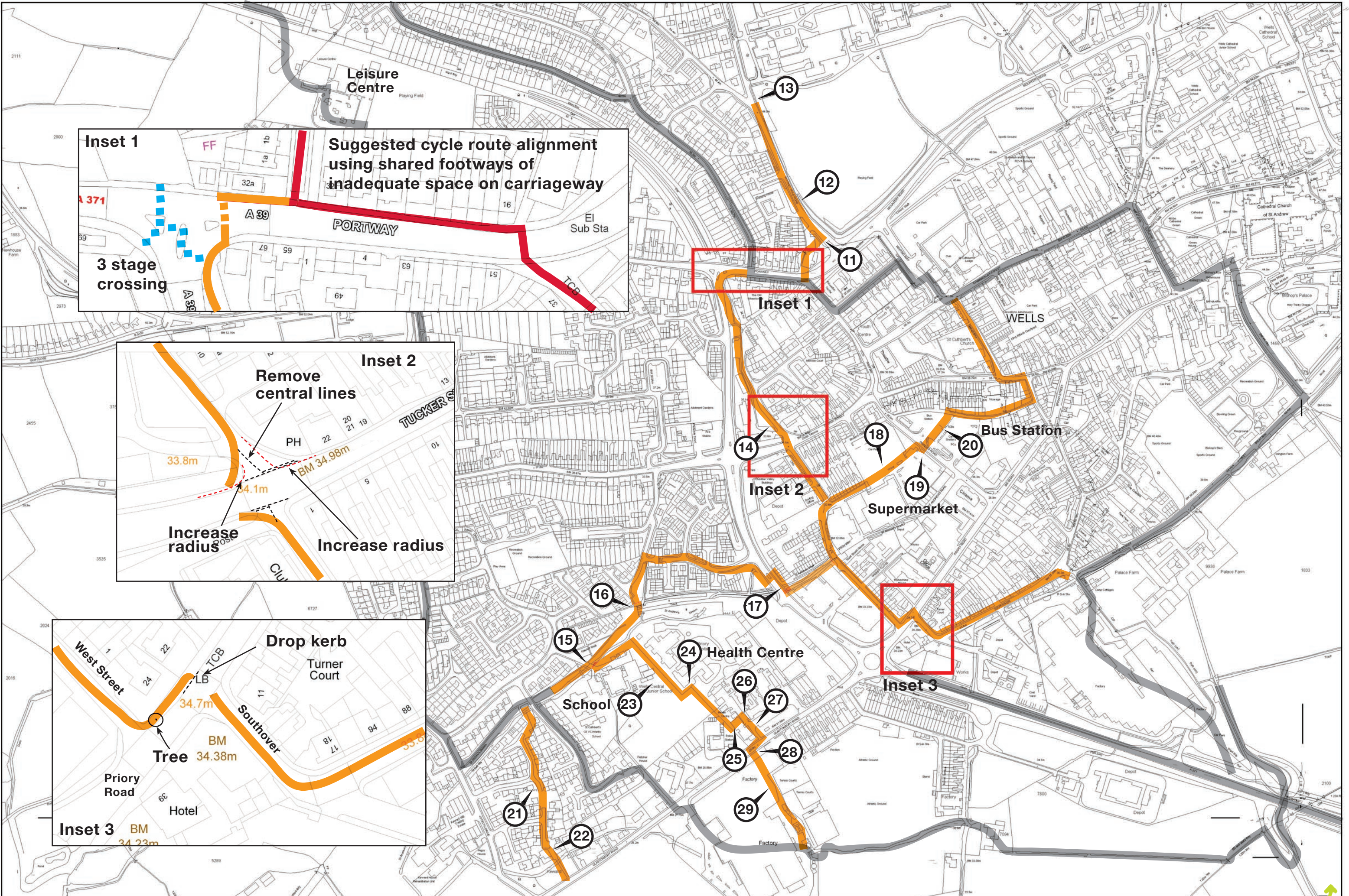
Wells City Links

14. The route running along the western side of the City centre runs parallel to Strawberry Way on lightly trafficked roads which link very conveniently to major destinations – Tesco, Lidl, and links to the Portway / Strawberry Way junction on existing footways which should be widened for shared use. There are two road crossings (Tucker Street and Priory Road) to be negotiated and proposals for minor improvements are shown in the insets.
15. The existing paths through the residential area are abused and badly damaged, and the verges in very poor condition from being used for car parking. Better control of vehicle access would need to be included in a programme to widen these paths to 2.5 metres.
16. A small area of land is held by the Treasury Solicitor and a licence for a path to close the gap in the path network should be secured to give access to Clements Close.



Land at 16. tracks show desire line

17. Existing cycle crossing with shared use footways.
18. An existing pedestrian ramp leads from Ethel Street, a quiet cul-de-sac, to Tesco. With some modification, or the creation of a new ramp in the raised planting area, this would allow easy cycle access directly to Tesco. New cycle parking should be included in any scheme, and a convenient route across the Tesco site to the existing pedestrian access on Princess Road identified and marked with cycle signs on the carriageway
19. The crossing here should probably be at right angles.
20. The proposed re-arrangement of the Wells Bus Station should incorporate an identified cycle route across the site from the pedestrian access to Market Street for the City Centre. There is a clear desire line between Market Street and Tesco across the bus station and car park. If a cycle route is impractical, a clear walking route must be identified, which can be used avoiding conflict with cars and buses.
21. Bishop Lea Close is a quiet residential road.
22. Purpose built cycle route through this existing recent housing development (Osmond Drive).
23. Indicative alignment of the route through the school grounds following the perimeter to minimise conflict.
24. Access to the Priory at this point is the simplest and most convenient.
25. A path skirting the Priory and linking into the school grounds opens up convenient access to health facilities for the population to the north without the need to make a long journey using the main roads. Access into the Priory grounds is complicated by the buildings, but there is an acceptable route, though a better might emerge in discussions with the Complex management, which should be encouraging healthy lifestyles and sustainable access to the Complex. Avon and Somerset Police have consented to use of their adjoining compound to make the link to Glastonbury Road and this link may be preferred as a more immediately deliverable solution, retaining the sole access to the Priory from Glastonbury Road. The adjacent path through the school grounds would be replaced by this path.
26. Main reception.
27. A route would be possible through the grounds of the Health Complex to the main reception to encourage access on foot and cycle.
28. If the Nutricia site is developed as planned, the main entrance will be at this point with a mini-roundabout on Glastonbury Road. A crossing is required for pedestrians and cyclists to the Priory Health Park Complex.
29. The link follows the proposed road layout for Nutricia as being a direct route to the Priory Health Complex.



**Perimeter Route –
suitable for equestrians
avoiding urban areas.**

- 30. Existing path links to the Haybridge path.
- 31. The path through the public open space should be widened to 2.5m for shared use. There is ample width of land to allow this.
- 32. A short length of path in the land bordering the Cemetery would reduce the potential for conflict between walkers, cyclists and horse riders on the footway approaching the existing pedestrian crossing. The crossing should be modified to allow use by three groups of users.
- 33. Jocelyn Avenue is a quiet residential road quite suitable for cycling and horse riding. The road would form part of the equine Wells ‘by-pass’ allowing horse riders to link round the southern side of the City between the Haybridge path and the Dulcote Path.
- 34. The path next to St Andrew’s Stream could be simply widened to 2.5m which would be suitable for shared use as an unsegregated path.



Path by St. Andrew's Stream

- 35. Resurfacing Shady Lane and widening access to the housing to the west opens up the route avoiding the difficult footpath through the centre of the Wells Central School site.
- 36. A safe crossing of the Glastonbury Road would ideally include a shared use zebra crossing to Shady Lane.

- 37. Ideally the path will be traffic free through development site.
- 38. New bridge over river proposed as part of redevelopment of the Nutricia site.



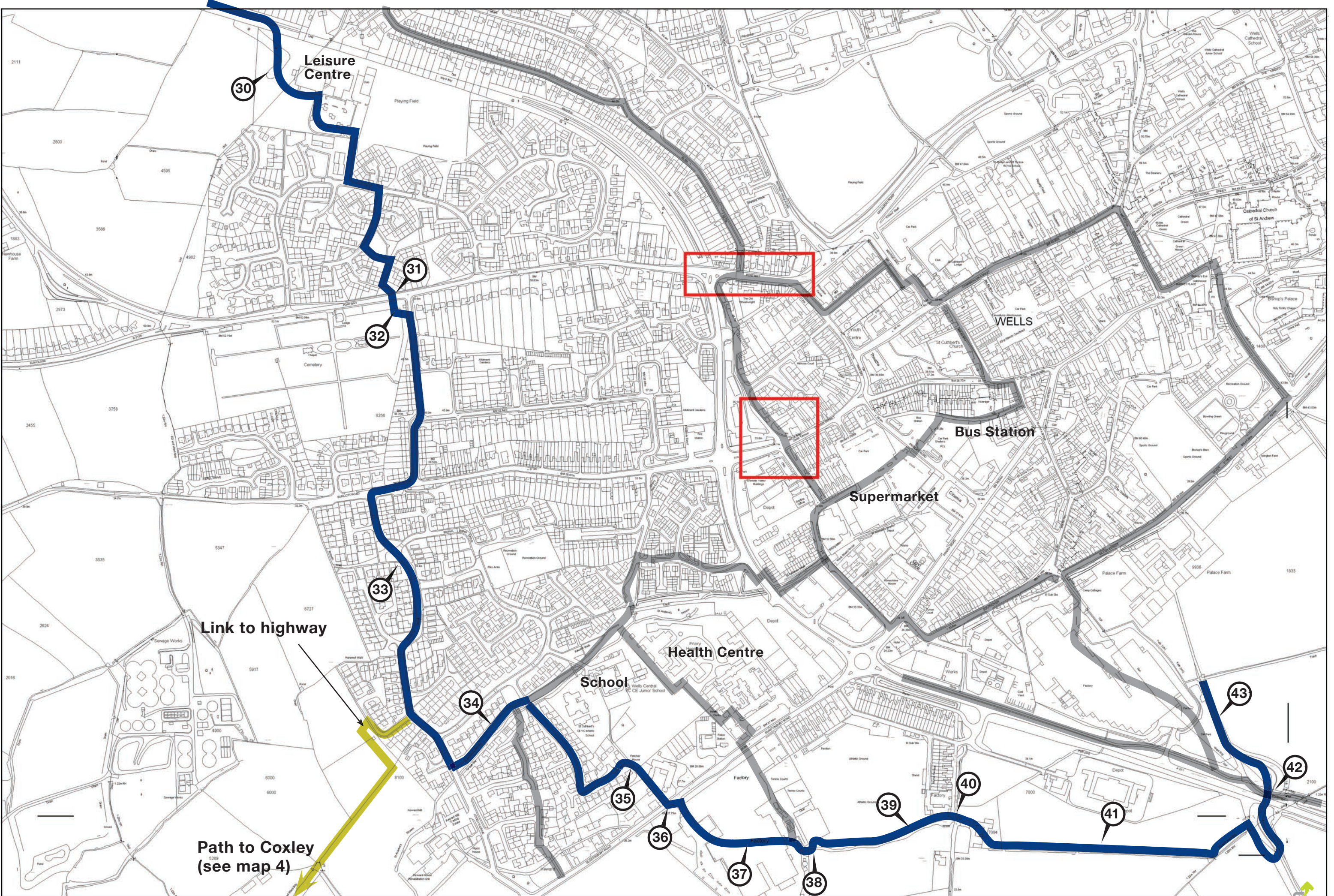
Path run along left hand boundary

- 39. A new path along the bank of the river past the athletics ground.
- 40. Existing bridge over river at Gate Lane.
- 41. Indicative route through Cathedral City Park site – the alignment should be convenient and direct and serve the development occupiers.
- 42. The farm accommodation bridge carries the farm tack and public footpath across East Somerset Way. In the event that the ‘Cold Store’ site (Cathedral City Park) is developed as a significant employment site, as seems possible in the foreseeable future, the bridge will become an important link from Cathedral City Park to the City Centre.

- 43. Existing concrete farm track and public footpath will be linked to new development (if approved) and should also be linked direct to the Dulcote path.



Existing farm track

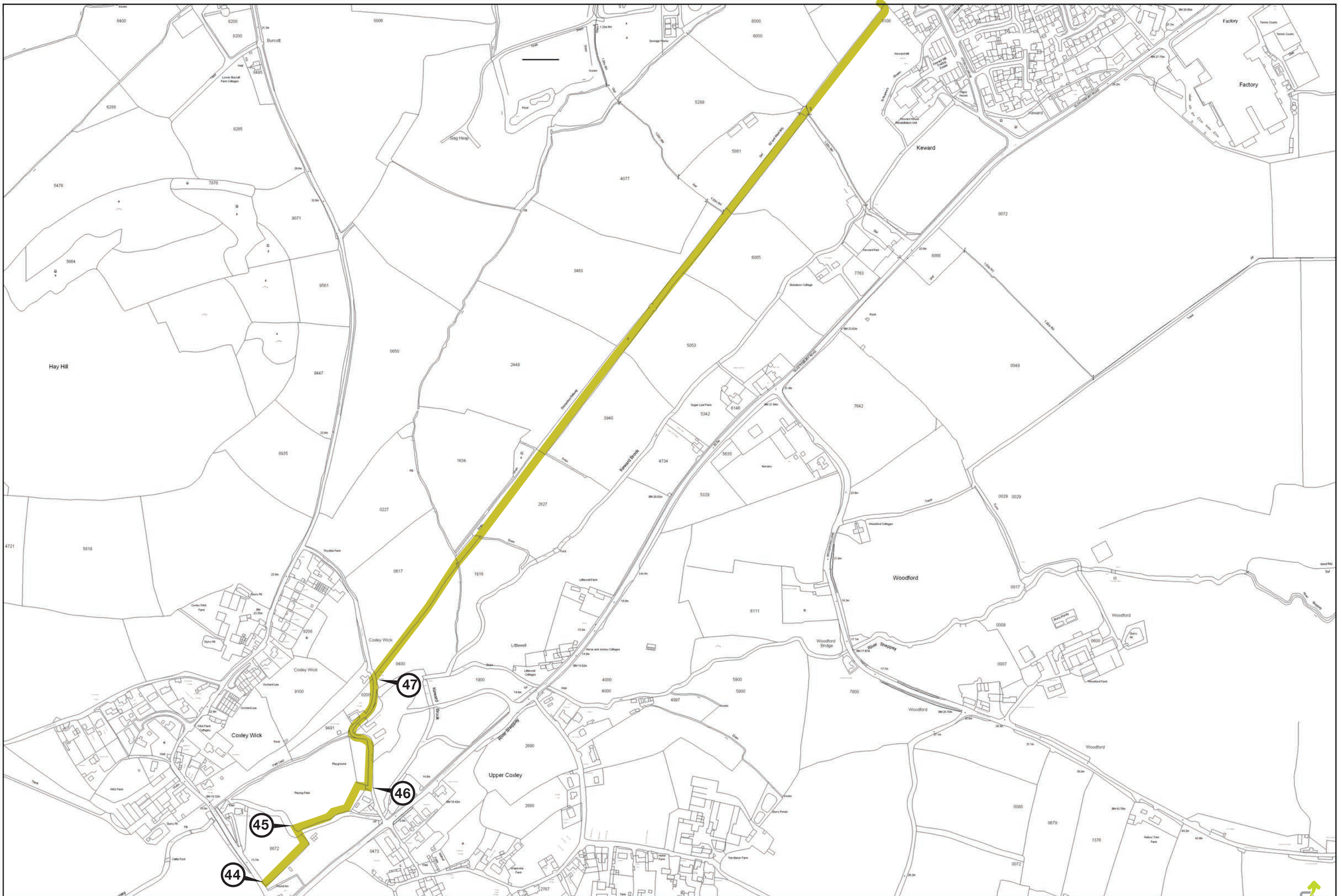


Coxley and Wells Path

- 44. The path joins the lane and runs along the field boundary within a fenced corridor.
- 45. A new bridge will be required over the River Sheppey.
- 46. The path will serve as the primary means of access on foot and cycle to the village recreation ground from Coxley Wick, allowing users to avoid use of the A39. The path can run set back slightly from the riverside to the existing field gates and Mill Lane.
- 47. The former railway line is the logical level traffic free route from the Mill Lane to the outskirts of Wells. This will require the agreement of a number of private landowners.
- 48. Link to highway (see previous map).



The former railway line



City of Wells Cycle Network Map 4

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Tor Furlong

49. The route skirts the moat of the Bishop's Palace on a wide path in this most attractive setting to reach the City Centre / Market Place.



Existing gates and barrier to Cathedral Walk

50. Suggested improvements to the crossing allow users to cross directly and improve visibility. Restricting car parking at the crossing enhances safety and ease of use.
51. Currently this path access to the route is only suitable for walkers. Upgrading for shared use should be considered, as this is the most direct access for residents in the western part of this area. This would entail widening the fenced corridor round the playing fields and the path itself.



Path round field

52. Path across park suitable for shared cycle and foot access if widened to 2.0 metre min. Gateway should be 1500mm wide and gateway feature might be considered.
53. Access to children's play ground.

54. Main cycle and walking access point from adjacent housing.



55. The path runs in a min. 5 metre wide corridor between the stream to the north and the fence of the playing fields. This is a really attractive environment ideal for this type of facility.



Path by playing field

56. The access is narrow and at the junction with the path has a stone stile. Although the stile could be removed to allow wheelchair access – unless it is a flood defence – the width of the path restricts use to walkers.



Stile access to cemetery path

57. The path crosses a shallow drainage channel and a lightweight bridge will be required.

58. A number of the houses along this boundary have formed private accesses to the path, and it is unfortunate that there is no readily available public access from the adjacent residential area. If one could be located it would open up this route to a further population. The best potential might be via the cemetery to the west and this should be investigated further.

59. The path alongside the golf course has a rudimentary stone base, but the aim should be to construct a min. 2.0 metre wide path with a good quality tarmac surface for all season use. The golf course require the path to be fenced.



Path by golf course

60. Install a short ramp to ease the gradient at the entrance to the path, and remove the wing wall chicane arrangement and gate to ease passage for all users. The gate width should be 1500 mm to allow wheelchair users. A gateway feature and sign would highlight this important path entrance.
61. The footway should be widened for shared use. Flush kerbs with carriageway required.
62. The South Horringtons driveway could allow access on foot and cycle.

